

Facts for Feds:

a briefing service of the
Federal Preservation Institute
National Park Service
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WEB SURVEY PROFILES FEDERAL PRESERVATION OFFICERS

Nearly 60 Percent of FPOs have Less Than Five Years of Tenure

During February 2009 the Federal Preservation Institute conducted a web-based survey of designated Federal Preservation Officers. The ten question survey was sent to all Federal Preservation Officers using the list maintained by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Although Department of Defense staff was unable to participate due to internet restrictions, nearly half of all designated Federal Preservation Officers responded to the questionnaire. Some of the interesting results include:

Are Federal Preservation Officers Qualified?

The current standard for Federal Preservation Officer qualifications is the 1983 Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications for the disciplines of archaeology, history, architectural history and architecture. Only forty-six percent of current Federal Preservation Officers meet this standard. In the mid-1990s, nearly 60 percent of the Federal Preservation Officers met the Secretary's standards. Fortunately, if one uses the revised standards published in 1998, which expand the defined historic preservation disciplines, it appears that nearly three-quarters of Federal Preservation Officers would be considered qualified.

What is the Tenure of an Average Federal Preservation Officer?

On average a Federal Preservation Officer has just over four years experience as the agency's chief preservation official. However, nearly 60 percent of Federal Preservation Officers have less than five years of experience in the position and six were appointed within the past year. This suggests that there is a relatively high turnover rate for individuals holding the Federal Preservation Officer position. It also supports recommendations for increased Federal Preservation Officer training opportunities.

Are Federal Preservation Officer Duties Recognized by Federal Agencies?

More than 70 percent of Federal Preservation Officers have their historic preservation duties included in their job descriptions and as part of their performance measurement system. The Federal Preservation Officers within the general schedule (GS) system appear to be equally divided between GS-14 and GS-15 positions, with a few serving at the GS-13 level.

How Many Staff do Federal Preservation Officers Supervise?

Sixty percent of Federal Preservation Officers do not supervise other historic preservation professionals and twenty percent supervise only one staff member.

What Topics are of Interest to Federal Preservation Officers?

Not surprisingly, concerns regarding portions of the Section 106 process and issues surrounding Tribal consultation were high on their list of concerns. Next in line were issues about Section 110 and training and credentialing for Federal Preservation Officers.

What Disciplines Do Federal Preservation Officers Represent?

The table below presents the occupational series of Federal Preservation Officers as reported in the survey. The traditionally recognized preservation disciplines of archaeology, history, and architecture number about one-third of the positions.

Series	Title	Number
028	Environmental Protection Specialist	5
170	History	1
193	Archaeology	5
301	Miscellaneous Administration and Program	7
340	Program Management	
343	Management and Program Analysis	
801	General Engineering	1
808	Architecture	3
810	Civil Engineering	1
905	Attorney	1

What Comes Next?

The Federal Preservation Institute will share the complete results of this first survey with the Federal Preservation Officer Forum. While this initial survey focused on the designated Federal Preservation Officers, subsequent surveys will address Deputy Federal Preservation Officers.

*For more information, send an email to NPS_fpi@nps.gov or call 202-354-6999.
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